Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

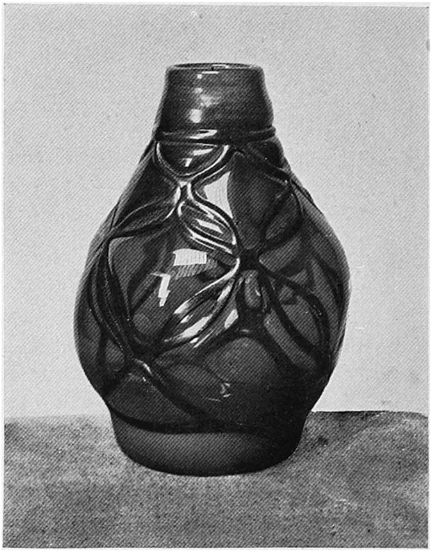
Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

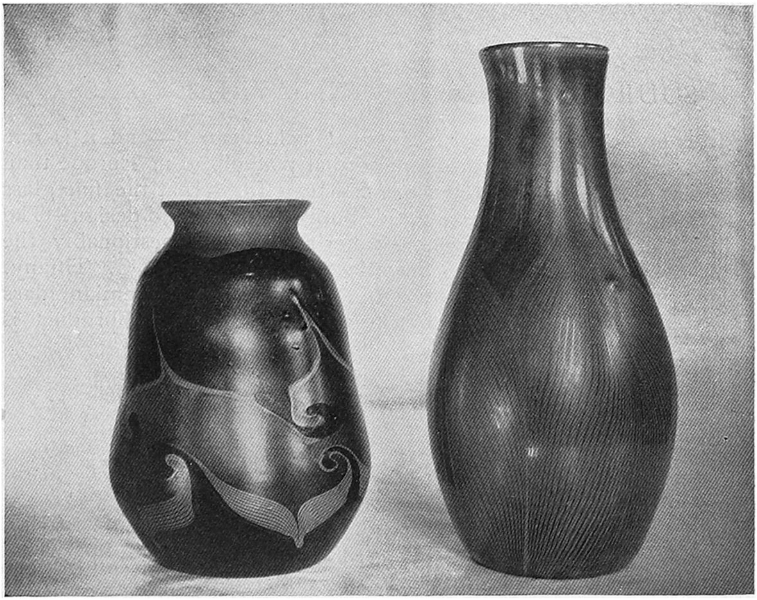
SOURCE OF BEAUTY IN FAVRILE GLASS

It is one of the glories of American achievement—and it is one more clearly recognized and more cordially admitted in Europe than any other fact regarding American artistic effort—that the fine glass work of this country leads the world, both in texture and design. The highest culmination of the glass-maker's art is unquestionably the favrile glass, invented and manufactured by Louis C. Tiffany. The day was when the beauties of Venetian and Bohemian glass were deemed unsurpassable, but to-day the Old World product is eclipsed by this New World claimant of public favor.

Despite the fact that favrile glass was fairly familiar to European connoisseurs and collectors, many beautiful specimens having been secured in England and on the Continent by private individuals and museums, the superb collection exhibited by Tiffany at the Paris Exposition created little less than a sensation. Every known make of artistic glassware was there on exhibition, but the question of superiority was never in doubt, and favrile glass won the Grand Prix. Since the Paris Exposition the Tiffany works have not been idle, nor has Mr. Tiffany himself been lacking in enterprise in devising new designs and new modifications of his product. This is evidenced by the fact that his display at the recent Pan-American Exposition was superior in every way to that made in Paris. The extent and magnificence of this Pan-American collection of favrile glass was simply astounding. In grace and uniqueness of design, in the richness and iridescence of its colors, it represented a refinement of taste and an attainment of the beautiful rarely if ever equaled in the art industries.



VASE, BLOWN THROUGH METAL BINDING
By Louis C. Tiffany



VASES OF FAVRILE GLASS
By Louis C. Tiffany

Tiffany's work has been termed the application of the maximum of ideal beauty to things utilitarian. To class the exquisite pieces into which favrile glass is manufactured with utilitarian products, however, can only be done by the good-natured concession of courtesy, since the idea of utility scarcely enters into consideration in the manufacture of articles of this fragile material, many of which are worth half their weight, if not more, in gold. More properly speaking, favrile glassware, such as was shown at Buffalo, is an expression for the highest possible beauty obtainable in a material generally regarded as uncompromising and difficult to work, and the exquisite pieces thus become the delight and pride of those who appreciate this form of excellence.

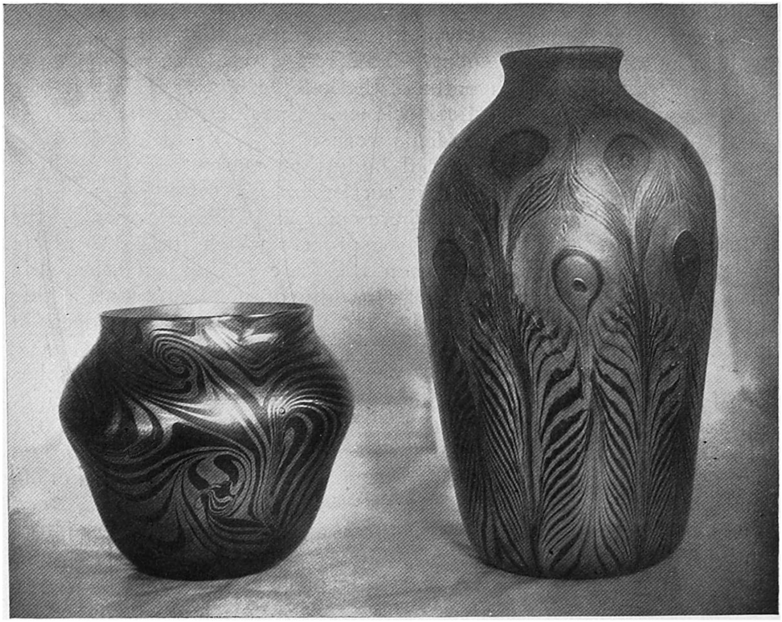
It is a rather curious fact that many forms of art product in this country are slighted if not contemned by native collectors. Native artists and art dealers, for instance, lament that American paintings are a drug, and that European pictures take precedence in private and public collections. In the matter of favrile glass, however, the conditions are reversed, and it takes precedence over imported articles of equal value.

Few people, perhaps, who marveled at the subtile beauty of the

Tiffany favrile exhibit at Buffalo have any comprehension of the principle underlying its manufacture, or of the secret of its marvelous color effects. It has been said that the history of glass is the history of civilization, the oldest piece of dated glass known, an Egyptian amulet, now in the British Museum, reaching back to 3064 B. C. Since that time the art has passed through the most varied development, and yielded almost every imaginable product. It is much to say, therefore, that after such a history, America can claim the honor of producing the most admirable results in this material.

The reason for this is, perhaps, not far to seek. Mr. Tiffany is a natural-born artist, with a fine feeling for the beautiful, and what is more to the point, is an assiduous student and a natural-born experimenter. When once his interest was centered on glass-work, his passion for investigation and experiment and his love of the beautiful did the rest. His inherited taste and his natural talent were fostered in the studios of Inness, Colman, Leon Bailey, and other great artists, in the first days of his efforts. His early training was thus just what was needed for the development of his positive genius.

"Mr. Tiffany's work is a lesson to every craftsman," said Gardner



VASE AND BOWL OF FAVRILE GLASS
By Louis C. Tiffany

C. Teall, in an article published in Brush and Pencil a year or two ago. "While there is no absolute defiance of tradition, yet everything is so invested with beautiful and sensible originality that it cannot fail to appeal to the æsthetic and to the practical senses at one and the same time. Tiffany is the recognized authority in America on glass, and his own experiments and developments along this line have brought him the commendation of all lovers of the beautiful. He has not been content with the mere discovery of things, but like Morris, he has spent quite as much energy in applying his art, and doing that unselfishly, devoting whole days at a time, as he often does, to working out some idea, which, when grasped, appears simple enough, but which most people would not have the patience to make clear to themselves, and which idea he always gladly gives to the world from a love for the promotion of the beautiful."

Mr. Tiffany has never made a secret of the principle underlying his experiments. This he has frankly announced, and he has thus put it in the power of any clever worker in glass to follow a similar line of investigations, and produce equally desirable results. That no other worker has taken advantage of the principle thus openly avowed and produced a rival product is perhaps one of the best compliments to the original discoverer.

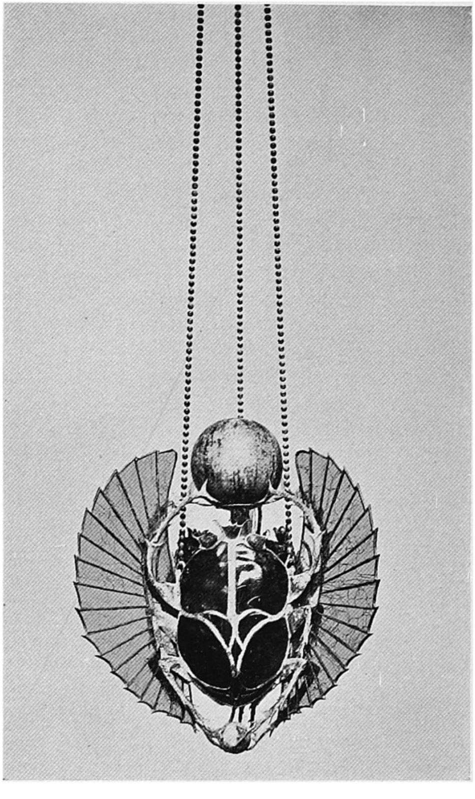
To an earnest, able worker a hint is often all that is necessary to result in a glorious achievement. To Mr. Tiffany the hint came from Sir David Brewster, the inventor of the kaleidoscope, and one of the greatest contributors to optical science. Speaking of the decay of glass, Sir David says, in one of his works:

"There is perhaps no material body that ceases to exist with so much grace and beauty, when it surrenders itself to time and not to disease. In damp localities, where acids and alkalies prevail in the soil, the glass rots, as it were, by a process which it is difficult to study. It may be broken between the fingers of an infant, and in this state we generally find in the middle of it a fragment, a thin fiber of the original glass which has not yet yielded to the process of decay.

"In dry localities where Roman, Greek, and Assyrian glass has been found, the process of decomposition is exceedingly interesting, and its results singularly beautiful. At one or more points in the surface of the glass the decomposition begins. It extends around that point in a spherical surface, so that the first film is a minute hemispherical one of exceeding thinness. Film after film is formed in a similar manner, till perhaps twenty or thirty are crowded into a tenth of an inch. They now resemble the section of a pearl or of an onion, and as the films are still glass, we see brilliant colors of thin plates when we look down through their edges, which form the surface of the glass.

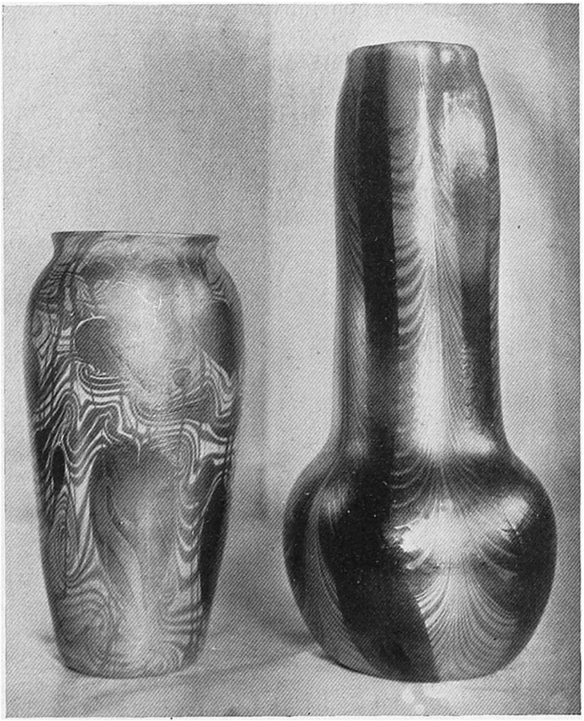
"These thin edges, however, being exposed to the elements, decompose. The particles of silex and the other ingredients now readily separate, and the decomposition goes on downwards in films parallel to the surface of the glass, the crystals of silex forming a white ring and the other ingredients rings of a different tint. . . . . Such is the process of decomposition around one point; but it commences at many points, and generally these points lie in straight lines, so that the circles of decomposition meet one another and form sinuous lines. . . . .

"When the decomposition has gone regularly on round a single point, and there is no other change than a division of the glass into a number of hemispherical films, like a number of watch glasses within one another, the group of films exhibits in the polarizing microscope a beautiful circle of polarized light with a black cross. The edges of the hemispherical films give to the figure the colors of thin plates, and we imagine we have before us a circular crystal with its fine system of polarized rings. The colors, however, are only those of thin plates, and the light is the light that has been depolarized cylindrically, as it were, by refraction, in passing obliquely through the hemispherical cups. When a drop of water, alcohol, or oil is applied to this or any other specimen, the fluid enters between the films and the polarized light, and the splendid colors immediately disappear."



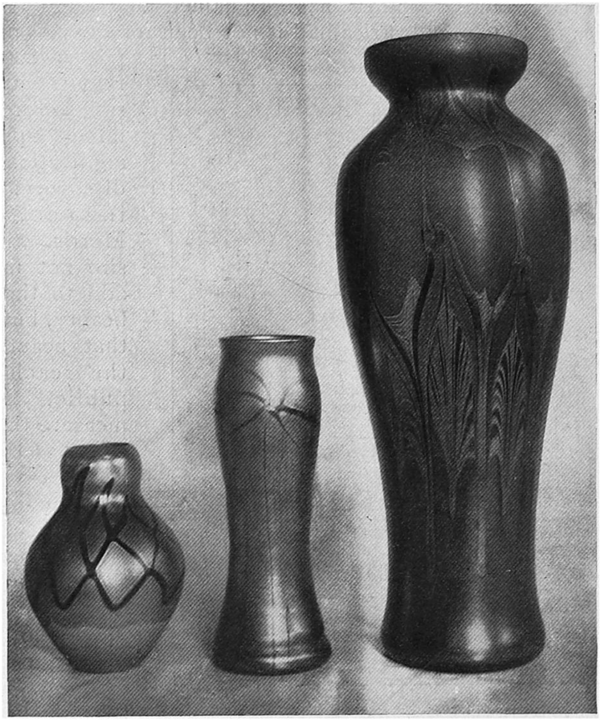
HANGING ELECTRIC LAMP
By Louis C. Tiffany

This may sound heavy and scientific for a popular article, but it is an explanation in a nutshell of the marvelous iridescence and the lustrous effects of favrile glass. Mr. Tiffany simply set to work on an observed fact—observed long before his day—and by persistent and repeated experiment discovered a way of simulating by artificial means the glorious display of colors produced by the natural decay of glass, which had long been the subject of comment among scientists. In other words, he discovered a process of checking decay, and by reversing the action, of arriving at the same effects without disintegration. To all intents and purposes, therefore, the remarkable beauty of favrile glass, its luster, its evanescent hues, its rich scintillating play of colors, is the beauty of mimic decay in the texture of the glass—a mimic decay that gives every color of the rainbow, and results in shades and combinations such as were never produced before by the glass-maker.



VASES OF FAVRILE GLASS
By Louis C. Tiffany

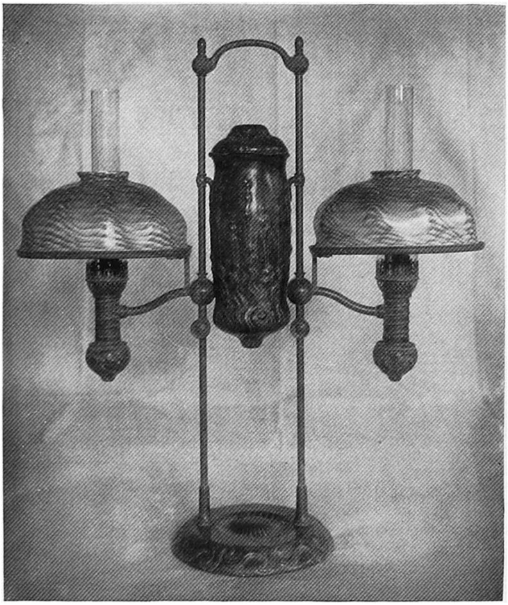
Mr. Tiffany's first great achievement was thus the discovery of an artificial means of duplicating the effects of natural decay. This was the feat of Tiffany the scientist. A further feat for the scientist was to vary the ingredients of the glass in the interest of variety. The rest was the work of Tiffany the artist—the molding of his specially prepared glass product on lines of beauty, and devising means of decoration to further enhance the rich qualities of the material.



VASES OF FAVRILE GLASS
By Louis C. Tiffany

That this work was long and arduous scarcely needs telling. It was not until 1893 that favrile glass was first exhibited. Its novel beauty then captivated the public, but the spirit of enterprise and the ambition to develop to the utmost the possibilities of the initial discovery have resulted in a vast improvement of the product. It would be difficult to conceive of effects in glass more marvelous than those displayed in the Pan-American exhibit. It is no wonder, therefore, that the glass-makers of the Old World should acknowledge and honor a New World leader in the art. Nor is it a wonder that the cleverest of the European manufacturers should laboriously seek the formula of the American discoverer and endeavor to imitate his ware.

The production of favrile glass was a long stride in progress, but the material would doubtless have remained one of the beautiful curiosities of the art industries had it not been for the cleverness and perfect taste of Tiffany the artist. As said before, he has no less a passion for application than for discovery. He is imbued, as was Morris, with a desire not merely to add to the world's beauty, but to bring that beauty within the reach of the public. In what measure that ambition has been realized the visitors to the Pan-American can testify.

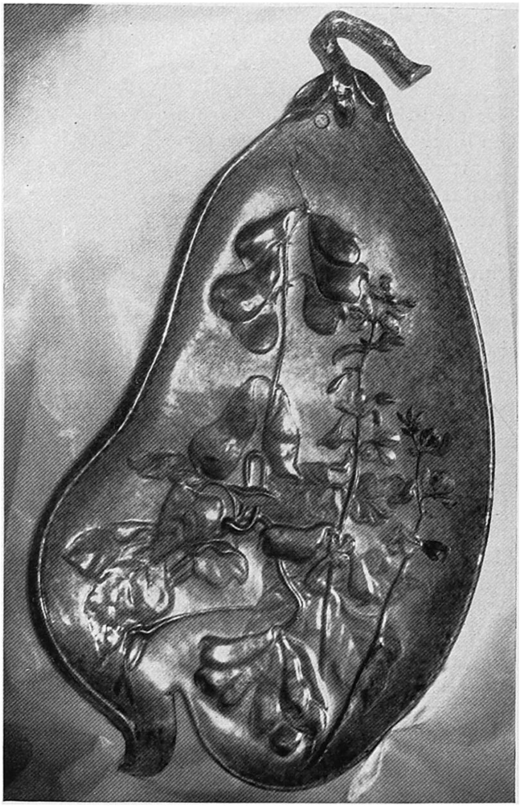


LAMP—BRONZE AND FAVRILE GLASS
By Louis C. Tiffany

Of the exhibit there made of more than three thousand pieces, no two were of similar design or coloring. The motives worked out in this delicate material were almost as varied as the number of articles shown. Typical shapes from the earliest days of glass-making to the present time were duplicated, and odd, artistic conceits in design and decoration were shown that originated in the Tiffany studios.

The exquisite quality of the material calls for a treatment no less unique and beautiful than the medium, and this was clearly recognized in the early days of favrile glass-making. The magnificent punch-bowl displayed at Buffalo, for instance, with its motive taken from a sea-shell, and reflecting all the hues of the choicest mother-of-pearl, could only emanate from an artist who apprehended the possibilities of his material, and was genius enough to make the design conform, in surpassing beauty, with the delicate substance used. Many of the vases, bowls, jardinières, scent-bottles, plaques, and many of the other decorative pieces that had no other purpose than to be beautiful, were no less exquisite in their treatment and effect.

Some were rich in blues and greens, and others in the russets and golds of autumn. Some were as opalescent as a soap-bubble, and almost as thin, while others were heavy with jeweled effects and rich with gold dust blown into the molten glass. Some were notable mainly in texture and shape, while others had added beauties imparted to them by carving, by cutting through one layer of glass down to another color, or by enrichments of metallic lusters.



PLAQUE—COPPER AND ENAMEL
By Louis C. Tiffany

Apart from any consideration of artistic design, which alone bespeaks painstaking efforts to attain perfection, the whole collection was an appeal to the æsthetic color sense. Herein lies one of the chief characteristics and beauties of the Tiffany ware: no matter how simple the design—nay, one may say, how formless the shape—the rich opal effects of the material itself satisfies the requirements of taste. Every piece gives an almost infinite variety of beauties, since whatever be the effect by reflected light, it is utterly transformed by transmitted light. What at one moment or under one set of conditions seems as soft and scintillating as mother-of-pearl may at another moment or under a different set of conditions appear as roseate as a sunset.

Scarcely less remarkable than favrile glass in artistic results is the Tiffany enamel, of which many specimens were shown at Buffalo. Many exquisite pieces of copper in repoussé, of chaste and unique design, and covered with an almost indestructible enamel as beautiful in its tints as the choicest of the favrile vases, were exhibited.

It is not the purpose of this article to describe individual pieces of the Tiffany output. One could no more do this effectively than one could describe the harmonies of a masterpiece of music. It is the intention only to state clearly America's rank in at least one line of art product, and to give some suggestion of the causes behind the mysterious and marvelous play of colors observable in the Tiffany ware. The Tiffany studios have their secrets of detail that are jealously screened from vulgar inspection—that is a matter of business which the public has no right to probe. The hint given above is sufficient for the inquiring and the curious.

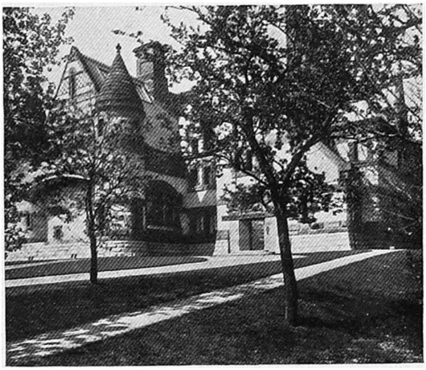
James L. Harvey.

* * *

AN APPRECIATION OF HUBERT VON HERKOMER

No present-day artist has acquired a more enviable reputation, and none perhaps has secured for himself a surer place in fame, than Hubert von Herkomer. As landscapist, *genre* painter, portraitist, illustrator, enamelist, etcher, teacher, he has been equally successful. A man as many-sided as he, one so pronounced in his art theories and so loyal to his convictions, is a character with whom the student of art should be familiar.

Occasional notes and brief items have appeared during the last decade or so on some one or other of von Herkomer's activities, but it is only recently that a satisfactory account of his life and a critical analysis of his character and work have appeared. This is the sumptuous volume by A. L. Baldry, whose careful, painstaking study


THE ARTIST'S HOME